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P 251823Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3091
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL BUENOS AIRES 000196 SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2039 TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: MENDOZA GOVERNOR PRAISES BILATERAL COLLABORATION ON PUBLIC SECURITY
Classified By: Ambassador Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

1. (C) Summary: Mendoza Governor and Peronist party member Celso Jaque praised bilateral collaboration on improving security and combating drug trafficking during a February 12 meeting with Ambassador Wayne. Jaque cited crime reduction as his top priority and regarded a focus on prevention as a means to that end. The Governor updated the Ambassador on his efforts to soften the impact of the international crisis on the province's fruit producers. Jaque said he will travel to the United States in June to request modifications of Mendoza's program with the Inter-American Development Bank to better assist the province's fruit producers and processors. He also updated the Ambassador on how this year's legislative

elections are shaping up in his province, Argentina's fifth most populous electoral district. End Summary. 2. (SBU) Ambassador Wayne met with

13. (SBU) Jaque cited reducing crime as his top priority, stressing that the province has to work on prevention programs to reduce its high ir. He said the province will build a women's prison and a federal prison that will house 1500 inmates. (This is part of an ongoing effort by Mendoza authorities to comply with a Supreme Court order instructing the provincial government to report concrete measures to improve prison conditions and address several rulings by the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.) He added that the province has established a return-to-school program for unemployed youth between the ages of 14 to 18 and reported that last year 4000 teenagers were able to attend school thanks to the program's scholarships. Jaque said the province, which has also established five drug addiction centers, is working closely with schools, NGOs, and the Catholic Church on drug prevention programs. Kudos for DEA Support

----- 4. (C) The Ambassador said that although economic concerns remain the USG's number one priority, the new U.S. administration offers an opportunity to improve and deepen bilateral relations, a message the Ambassador said he recently conveyed to Foreign Minister Taiana and Vice Minister Taccetti. Jaque said he is quite pleased with the bilateral collaboration his province has received to date. He praised the close support from DEA in helping the Mendoza police establish a taskforce with the Mendoza Airport Security Police and Customs. Jaque added that Mendoza's Security Minister just visited Buenos Aires to put the finishing touches on the taskforce, which the Governor expects will be up and running shortly. He added that although they have good border controls, they hope to continue collaboration with ICE and DEA in this area. He added that Minister of Justice Anibal Fernandez is working on acquiring detectors that would tighten border security and on purchasing additional surveillance vans. On the Mendoza Economy and U.S. Investment -----

15. (SBU) Jaque said the international economic crisis has not yet significantly affected the province. Nonetheless, he stressed that he is focused on countering its potential impact on Mendoza farmers by making assistance to producers a provincial government policy. Noting that prices of all fruits have dropped significantly, Jaque said his province has employed subsidy programs to assist producers of peaches, cherries, pears, apples, and grapes. In addition, he is focused on protecting Mendoza's garlic industry, which he said produces 95 percent of Argentine garlic (San Juan province provides the remaining 5 percent, the Governor claimed) and employs 4,800 workers. Jaque said he will travel to the United States in June to request modifications of Mendoza's program with the Inter-American Development Bank to better support the province's fruit producers and processors.

16. (SBU) The Governor said he hoped the U.S.-based bottle-making plant, Owens Illinois, will remain interested in building a plant in Mendoza. He indicated that they are still waiting Owens Illinois' decision as "we have done everything we can and the ball is now in their court." He welcomed additional U.S. investment to Mendoza.

2009 Legislative Elections -----

17. (C) Jaque said Mendoza will hold their legislative elections the same day as the national congressional midterms (anticipated for the third week in October) when the province will elect senators, deputies, and councilpersons. He said there will be at least three candidate slates in the race and added that Vice President and former Mendoza governor Julio Cobos and the Mendoza Radical party have not resolved their differences since Cobos left the Radical party to serve in the Kirchner government. He described the province as quite "conservative," remarking that voters tend not to support candidates backed by coalitions.

BIO Note ----- 8. (SBU) Born on September 24, 1960 in Malargue, Mendoza, Jaque earned an accounting degree from the University of Cuyo. He served as National Senator for Mendoza from 2003 until December 2007 when he assumed his current post. Jaque was a provincial deputy from 1991 to 1995 and from 1994 to 1995 a chairman of the Treasury and Budget Committee in Mendoza's legislature. He served as Mayor of Malargue for two consecutive terms (1995-1999 and 1999-2003). From 2001 to 2003, he was the Peronist party vice-president in Mendoza.

He married Liliana Landete in 1989 and has two daughters. One of their daughters is participating in a student exchange program in Georgia and the Jaques have had a U.S. high school student living with them this year. Comment ----- 9. (SBU) As usual, Jaque was quite talkative. We are encouraged by his praise for DEA supp WAYNE .